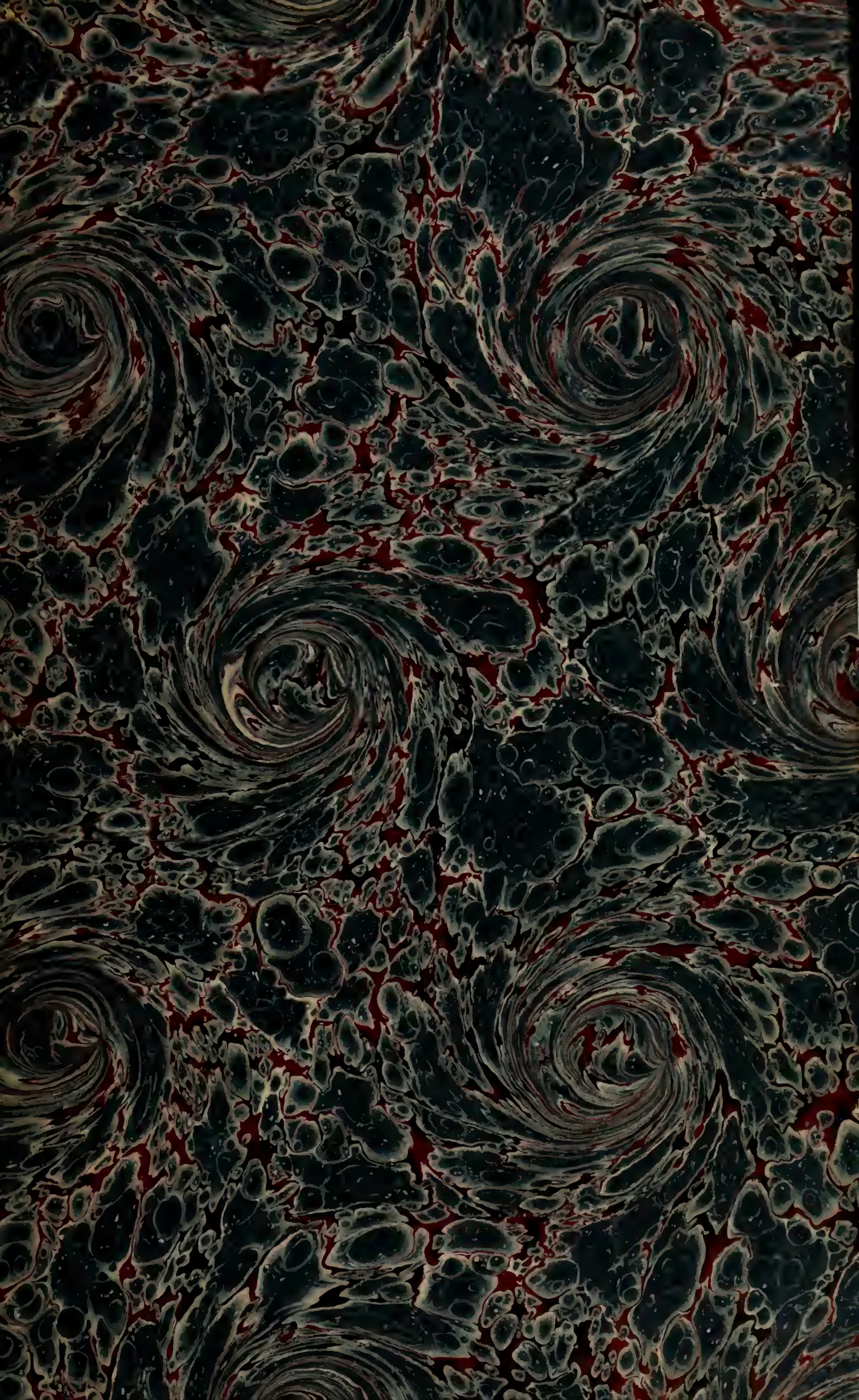

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MEMORIAL

CONCERNING

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

MILITARY AND NAVAL SURGERY.

ADDRESSED SEVERAL YEARS AGO

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL SPENCER,

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY;

AND NOW SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC.

BY

JOHN BELL, SURGEON.

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MEMORIAL

ON

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

NAVAL AND MILITARY SURGERY.

Vetus querela eſt, inde uſque, ab optimis et prudentiſſimis ſeculis deducta, reſpublicas circa leges quidem nimium Satagere, circa Educationem indiligentes eſſe. BACON.

MY LORD,

I BEG leave to addreſs your Lordſhip on a ſubject intereſting to every man of humane feelings, and where every man having ſuch feelings will claim a privilege above all ceremony. Yet I do not ſay this with the deſign of avoiding thoſe expreſſions of reſpect and deference which are due to rank and ſtation, and which are eſpecially becoming in one who obtrudes his advice: it is from a per-

ſuaſion of your Lordſhip's goodneſs that I venture to addreſs you; and I am ſenſible, that to do ſo in the moſt reſpectful language, to plead the cauſe of humanity with zeal, but with reſpect and deference, with all that ſubmiſſion which may beſpeak your Lordſhip's good opinion, can have in it nothing that is degrading.

Nor ſhall I affect a ſenſibility I do not feel; ſincerity and truth are the only apologies for this intruſion. I am not one of thoſe uninduſtrious, idle, turbulent men, who delight in complaining, changing and reforming; but I will mention without reſerve ſome things which are avowedly wrong in a department of the public ſervice, inferior to none in importance. And I fear that I can prefer no complaint to your Lordſhip concerning the preſent ſtate of Naval and Military Surgery, which will not be acknowledged by thouſands, and denied by none! no one who has ſeen even a little ſervice, who is not inured by uſe to ſights of miſery, whoſe heart is not ſhut againſt the compunctious viſitings of nature; no thinking nor feeling man will deny, that this department needs to be reformed.

This is not, my Lord, the language of affected ſenſibility, brooding over imaginary ills, nor is it the language of diſappointment I have not to complain of ill requitted ſervices or merit long neglected. From thoſe ſcenes of unceaſing contention and ſoli-

citation, where clamours for promotion are heard, not marked, I am too far removed to feel the benefit of your Lordſhip's favour. I have, I am conſcious, no ſelfiſh views, no mean nor worldly cravings, no deſires that I would not be proud to avow, not a wiſh but for the public good; and yet I fear, that after having thus obtruded my advice, I am going to ſuffer a more cruel diſappointment than if I were now employed in ſoliciting ſome petty intereſt of my own.

One claim I have to your Lordſhip's notice, and I will urge it for the ſake of that good cauſe which I have eſpouſed. I have ſtudied my profeſſion with honeſt diligence, and have applied myſelf alſo to the ſtudy of Naval and Military Surgery with particular care. At one time, my Lord, I attended the wounded ſeamen in the hoſpitals of Sheerneſs and Yarmouth, with the humanity and induſtry of one who loves his profeſſion, who, while he is employed in inſtructing others, is not unwilling to improve his own knowledge. This ſhould avail me much; for when propoſals, ſuch as I am now to lay before your Lordſhip, ariſe from ſincere motives, from no vain preſumptuous ſpeculating turn of mind; when a general ſcheme of education is propoſed by one who has himſelf ſtudied with becoming diligence; his advice, in matters relating to his own profeſſion, ſhould be heard with ſome degree of favour.

Beſides, this is an appeal in behalf of a great department of my profeſſion, a numerous claſs of uſeful men, who ſhould be learned, whoſe education is of infinite importance to the ſtate, who mix in every department of public and private life; it is an appeal, my Lord, which no one would care to make who were not ſincere, which no man would be able to make who had not ſtudied thoſe matters with diligence. When I thus break through the reſtraints and many indeſcribeable feelings natural to my private ſtation, it can be only with a ſincere deſire of being uſeful; perſonal intereſt I can have none; and unleſs I much abuſe the privileges of a free citizen, a common obſerver of public matters, a man of ſome profeſſional knowledge, your Lordſhip and the world will allow me the benefit of this common plea: "that I am acting from the beſt of motives."

The medical department of the public ſervice requires men who, as phyſicians, are reſpectable for their general knowledge; who as ſurgeons are perfectly dexterous, well inſtructed in anatomy, and accuſtomed to operations! active, humane, ſenſible and diligent men are required! men inventive in exigencies, acquainted with all the reſources of their art. But it is not, my Lord, by a ſlight, irregular or accidental education that ſuch talents and diſpoſitions can be acquired; that they are required I am

perſuaded from this circumſtance, that thoſe men who have been in the ſervice, although wanting that broad and general education which is the foundation of all improvement, have yet become active, humane, prudent, diligent and fertile in reſources.

It is the rule of the ſervice, that every one ſhall paſs certain trials before he be received as a ſurgeon in his Majeſty's fleets or armies; but if it be really a matter of importance to call every young man before this tribunal of examinators, it muſt be infinitely more important to inquire, what public opportunities he has had before he appears in this court of inquiſition. Is he the ſon of a gentleman? Has he lived in a family where he could learn induſtry, morals and virtue, by example? Or has he been for years the ſettled member of a public ſchool, where the care and ſuperintendence of his teachers might ſupply thoſe almoſt unſuppliable wants? No! He has been thrown from his childhood almoſt an orphan upon the world! A young man for example in no affluent circumſtances ſtruggles for one or two years to obtain the moſt ordinary points of knowledge; or without knowledge, he learns by rote to anſwer the common queſtions. He undergoes a ſlight examination, is allowed a diploma, and goes along with troops to the moſt ſickly climates, on the moſt dangerous ſervice. He is at firſt, indeed, received only as a mate, but by gradation he becomes

a ſurgeon, and too ſoon he finds himſelf in a ſituation of reſponſibility and difficulty, to which his higheſt ambition had not dared to aſpire.

When ſuch young men return after ſome years, they have indeed acquired a knowledge of the ſervice, and of the world, but not of their profeſſion; they have acquired all that experience could give them, but ſtill they feel the defects of their original education, and like men of ſenſe and honour, they ſtrive to mend thoſe defects; they return to the various ſchools of medicine to have knowledge and profeſſional learning grafted upon experience, becauſe they were hurried into the world too early to have their experience founded on previous knowledge.

This, and much more, my Lord, than I dare mention on the preſent occaſion, would be prevented and reformed by inſtituting a National School. A School of Naval and Military Surgery would be more effectual in preſerving the lives of our countrymen, than all the hoſpitals, civil or military, that have ever been endowed; it would be an inſtitution humane, charitable and uſeful, above all others; it would be an object almoſt of national gratitude. A School of Military Surgery would make heads as well as hands; it would infuſe energy into the duties of every hoſpital, and would give due effect to the expenditures of Government; it would breed men

worthy of being employed, and would receive them again after their return from foreign ſervice. Such an inſtitute would become a ſociety, not of ſchoolmen and theoriſts, but of men who had mixed with the world; who, after having been abſent on ſervice, would return to the ſchool to perfect their ſtudies, and to conſolidate their knowledge! There the army and navy ſurgeons would find opportunities of reading, diſſecting, converſing on medical ſubjects, and would meet unexpectedly with friends from all quarters of the world, endeared by the recollection of former ſervices and hardſhips, and ſtill more by preſent purſuits. A National School would thus become a point of conflux for many ſtreams of knowledge; it would be a place of ſtudy as well as of teaching; it would be a buſy centre for the medical department, and would give Government a command at all times of men thoroughly qualified for every line of ſervice. I do affirm it would be an honour to this country, as the want of it is a diſhonour; it would be more ſubſervient to the buſineſs of the ſtate, and to the purpoſes of humanity, than any college ever was to the cauſe of religion or ſcience.

From the inſtitution of a National School of Naval and Military Surgery, I have imagined, and it is no dream, incalculable benefits to individuals, to the profeſſion, and to the ſtate. I am indeed ſurpriſed that it has not been a chief object with the

miniſters of this country, and yet I am doubtful how the propoſal may be received by thoſe accuſtomed to judge of high matters. With ſuch thoughts labouring in my mind, and with the entire perſuaſion that your Lordſhip will be delighted with whatever promiſes a public good, I muſt write with a degree of enthuſiaſm, in regard to the main object of my addreſs, and with a perfect freedom in all other reſpects, which your Lordſhip knows how to excuſe, perhaps to approve. Thus, my Lord, I begin, and leave off without proceeding to thoſe proofs which I cannot but give unwillingly.

How ſhall I venture to tell you of the melancholy ſtate into which the public ſervice has fallen? It never was reſpectable, it is now diſgraceful. Things are truly come to ſuch a paſs, that to point out the means of reformation muſt be a great relief. No plan of national education has ever been propoſed. Every other branch of our profeſſion is taught, apart and carefully, while Military Surgery, the moſt peculiar of all departments, has been left to chance.

When a young man enters into the Navy, his education is but ill begun, and cannot improve. He is put down into a hole, there to remain for years. He is deprived of all communication, of all deſire of knowledge. To breathe the vital air, he muſt

live in the promiſcuous converſation of a ward-room. Politics, hiſtory, anecdote, news; every thing is heard there but that which intereſts him moſt, his profeſſion! His youthful ambition is dead; his profeſſion is forgotten; his firſt proud feelings, which ſprung up with the firſt dawnings of knowledge, are buried there; his mind is vacant and powerleſs; "and all his precious hours are running down to waſte."

To the life of a navy ſurgeon there are, God knows, no ſeductions! Nothing, as it now ſtands, can drive a young man into ſuch a ſervice, but want of education, or want of friends; nothing can ſupport him, even for a ſhort term of years, through the labours and difficulties of this way of life, but a love of his profeſſion, and a ſenſe of duty above all obſtacles; hardly can any thing retain him in a ſervice ſo little honoured or reſpected; indeed he never feels himſelf till he leaves it, returns to ſchool, and begins his education anew! Thoſe very penſions which Government has held out as permanent rewards, are but as bribes for ſuch young ſurgeons to continue their ſervices only in the days of their ignorance, and to retire when they become really fit for ſervice; they complete their education with the accumulated wages of ſervice which they could not perform; when their education is in ſome degree renewed, when they are fit to be received

any where but in the fleet, they prefer the permanent eſtabliſhment of village ſurgeon, in ſome remote and miſerable place, to the ſervice of the State; plainly declaring for that profeſſion, to which they have given up the very prime and vigour of their lives, a degree of contempt, which, were it needful, I ſhould never be able to expreſs.

Be aſſured, my Lord, that while Government ſtrives to attach men to its ſervice; to lead them up to the knowledge of a difficult profeſſion, through all the intricacies of a learned ſcience, by money alone! it cannot ſucceed. Nor will men ever delight in a profeſſion which is not made reſpectable, honourable, and uſeful. Men trained to the ſervice as officers, find themſelves entered into a way of life full of danger, but full of honour; for this ſake they love it; and they are ſeparated from all other profeſſions by almoſt inſurmountable barriers. But ours is a profeſſion where a thouſand ways are open to ambition: every ſituation is eaſy and gainful, compared with this of the Navy; and from year to year, our fleets, are thoroughly drained of thoſe whom Government ſhould wiſh to retain.

Indeed, my Lord, this is a ſerious buſineſs, and men willing to find, in all that is done, nothing but negligence and waſte, will ſay, in deriſion, "Here now we ſee, how Government may, by a mean economy, ruin the moſt important of all eſtabliſh-

ments, and bring matters to ſuch a paſs, that young men of the loweſt education, of the ſlendereſt means, ſhall refuſe the ſervice; daily advertiſements ſhall be quite neglected; examination ſhall fall into utter diſuſe, and all ſhall be promiſcuouſly received! The Britiſh ſeaman ſhall be more helpleſs in the day of battle, than the peaſant employed only in peaceful labours, for the poor man provides from his hard-earned pittance help for himſelf and family in the hour of illneſs, while the moſt dangerous ſervice hardly extorts from ſuch a government even the appearance of care."

Theſe, my Lord, are the reproaches to which a government rather uninſtructed than careleſs, is unhappily expoſed; reproaches which are diſtreſſing only as they are true. Perhaps in a whole fleet there are few ſurgeons mates, poſſibly not one, who is able to perform the greater operations of ſurgery. It has happened, that, after the moſt earneſt entreaties of the officers, of the ſurgeon, of every one concerned, a ſhip of the line has gone into battle without one aſſiſtant on board! no, not one to ſcrew a tourniquet, to tie an artery, to hold a ſhattered ſtump, to put a piece of lint to a bleeding wound! Theſe things, my Lord, muſt make a ſtrong impreſſion on the public mind, and muſt create very awful feelings in thoſe who are concerned. Had thoſe ſhots which have paſſed ſo often through the cock-

pit, and which have killed ſo many, who being already wounded, had retired to the place of ſafety! had one of thoſe ſhots ſtruck the ſurgeon; what muſt have been the condition of thoſe who ſurvived him! Inevitable death from wounds which are not deadly, is an awful ſentence! who can bear it? Let the man of the moſt determined ſpirit, my Lord, think but of this! and, if he have not that diſregard of life which deprives mere animal courage of all praiſe, let him ſay with what heart he can go into the midſt of battle, where in a few moments all is horror, confuſion, and diſmay; where the danger of the hour makes no reſpect of perſons; where the high and the lowly are laid ſide by ſide, dead and dying! and the ſurgeon ſtands for a moment in his place, alone, fixed and motionleſs, with folded hands, in horror and deep aſtoniſhment at the ſituation in which he finds himſelf! "Can ſuch things be, and you that do behold them ſtill preſerve the natural ruby of your cheeks?"

Such are really the dangers to which that order of men are expoſed, upon whom, more than ever in the annals of this empire, the very empire itſelf and

Mr. Young, ſurgeon of the Ardent, was the only medical perſon on board that ſhip during the action with the Dutch Fleet, on the 11th of October. His Captain was killed the firſt broadſide; and the ſhip, by repeated exploſions, was in great confuſion. The carnage was very great. He was not able to perform any operations.

all its future annals depends. At one period of time we might have ſaid " Wars of conqueſt have ſurely ceaſed ;" but we have lived to ſee conqueſt running her headlong courſe, overturning empires and ſtates ! and too well we know, that while we continue a maritime power, wars of commerce will never ceaſe. We muſt maintain ourſelves as a maritime power ! this is the only means for internal ſafety in the preſent, and the only hope of our future ſucceſs, even of our exiſtence as a commercial ſtate. Stations muſt be multiplied ; new hoſpitals muſt be built ; the eſtabliſhment of our marine muſt be ſtrengthened on every ſide ; and nothing will give more ſplendour to the cares of Government, nor be more grateful to the public mind, than to ſee the medical department raiſed, improved, may I not ſay, created anew ?

But I am in danger, my Lord, of purſuing with declamatory warmth a ſubject which ſhould be calmly reaſoned ; and I am ſenſible, that ſuch a manner of writing would ill agree with the reſpect I bear your Lordſhip, or the plain and ſimple matter I have undertaken to explain. I will proceed, then, to reduce my diſcourſe to ſuch ſimple order as will prevent all poſſibility of my impoſing on others or deceiving myſelf ; for to this plain queſtion does it come at laſt : Is examination a perfect teſt of medical abilities ? Is it wiſer, ſafer, more

reputable for Government, to truſt to this ſingle teſt, and to hire as ſurgeons for the public ſervice the pupils of any ſchool, or of no ſchool! or to enſure to the State a body of well educated men, thoroughly inſtructed not only in ſurgery, but in military ſurgery; not only in the cure and prevention of diſeaſes, but in the cure and prevention of the diſeaſes peculiar to thoſe climates which are moſt deſtructive to our ſoldiers and ſailors?

1ſt, In fleets and armies, medicine is not, as in great cities, a piece of idleneſs and indulgence. The diſeaſes of camps and hoſpitals are not the nervous languors of the luxurious! they are epidemic and infectious diſeaſes, which ſweep away our fellow-ſubjects by thouſands! in a few weeks in Autumn, the flower of an army diſappears. In ſuch ſervice then, my Lord, the army ſurgeon holds no ſinecure place, but both by his dangers and his actual labours, earns his bread dearly; and the abilities, activity, and original education of the Medical Staff, ſhould be matters of no ſlight conſideration with Government.

2d, Good ſurgeons, my Lord, are the only part of the war eſtabliſhment which money cannot procure. Money and impreſs-warrants will procure ſoldiers and ſailors; Exchequer bills will equip fleets, and tranſport armies; but good ſurgeons cannot be bought. Either ſurgery is no ſcience, or it is of peculiar importance in the public ſer-

vice ; to have ſurgeons of the ordinary deſcription, it is indeed ſufficient to announce at the commencement of a war, that their ſalaries will be augmented ; but to have good ſurgeons, men worthy of thoſe ſalaries, men deſerving of being honoured with any charge in the public ſervice of the State ; they muſt be formed by a long and careful education. As well might Government expect to find generals in the ranks, as military ſurgeons in a country where there is no public ſchool.

3d, To become equal even to the ordinary duties of their ſtation, army ſurgeons ſhould be trained for years to the peculiar ſtudies of that department; they ſhould be encouraged by good opportunities ; they ſhould be bred under good and faithful teachers ; they ſhould be made members of a National School: There, their education ſhould be free of expence ; they ſhould have a common hall, and the uſe of a library ; they ſhould have demonſtrations of anatomy ; lectures on medicine, and on military ſurgery, diſſections, and the opportunity of performing operations upon the dead body ; in a ſchool ſo conducted, they would both find themſelves called to the ſtudy of a peculiar profeſſion, and would ſee that profeſſion ſupported in an honourable and reſpectable rank.

4th, In other Schools of Medicine, it may be obſerved, that thoſe young men only who are deſtined for the ordinary practice of the medical profeſſion,

are well ſupported in their views and plans of ſtudy. One, when his education is completed, is to aſſiſt a father or a brother in buſineſs; another is to enter into partnerſhip with ſome friend; another is to return to his relations abroad; another is to ſettle in his native place; and each of theſe having his particular deſtination in life, is ſupported by appropriate and regular funds. But how is the young man ſupported who is to enter into the navy or army? Very ſlender are his appointments; his education is limited and imperfect; he finds himſelf oppreſſive to his friends, and enters at once into the ſervice from hard neceſſity and the difficulty of purſuing his ſtudies; he enters, my Lord, into the public ſervice, not from enthuſiaſm for that ſervice, but in deſpair.

5th, I might appeal to the Public, whether young men entering into the navy and army, have in general ſerious or manly thoughts of their profeſſion, or time to qualify themſelves for ſervice, or means for completing their regular ſtudies. They paſs, perhaps, one or two years at ſome medical ſchool, while they are yet boys of fifteen or ſeventeen years of age, incapable of ſerious reflections, and thinking leaſt of all of any regular plan of education. They are allowed to paſs as mates; they riſe by gradation to be ſurgeons; and if before being thus promoted they are examined a ſecond time, it is after a few years of boiſterous ſervice in promiſcuous com-

pany, and in ſituations where they could not improve.

Now, though all the medical boards that ever ſat in judgment on the qualifications of young men, ſhould pronounce theſe to be good ſurgeons, I ſhould never think otherwiſe than I do at this moment, of men thus educated.

6th, Public and regular education being neglected, what will examinations avail? Truly nothing! becauſe, names of parts is not anatomy, and deſcribing amputation is not performing it! becauſe, the apprehenſion of having a trial to undergo at ſome very diſtant and uncertain period, has no terrors for a young man, nor can this ſalutary fear of puniſhment and diſgrace, ſupport, for years, a ſpirit of diligence and ſtudy! Young men delight more in books of queſtions and anſwers, than in books of ſcience! and a volume of dialogues on anatomy, and of queſtions in ſurgery, will enable any one to appear at Surgeons Hall, if he have but a quick ear and a retentive memory: It is thus that the moſt ignorant creature may defy the ſcrutiny of the wiſeſt and moſt penetrating.

7th, We muſt not blame examinators for capriciouſneſs, careleſſneſs, partiality, or undue favour; do what they will, they cannot make examination a juſt criterion of medical knowledge. I have known the moſt ignorant anſwer with petulence and fluency;

I have ſeen men of unqueſtionable abilities ſtand before their inferiors like criminals, and anſwer like fools. Examinations are no more a teſt of medical ſkill, than the rack and torture is a teſt of truth.

8th, But to you, my Lord, who are unacquainted with thoſe things, it muſt ſtill appear ſurpriſing, that examination ſhould fail to diſtinguiſh the ignorant from the ſtudious. But, my Lord, if examinations be careleſsly conducted, they muſt be plainly uſeleſs, and if ſevere, they do but put young men upon lying expedients.

When a candidate prepares himſelf for examination, he forſakes the ſtudy of his profeſſion, and turns himſelf to taſks from which his better judgment revolts; he keeps to his chamber for a few days or a few weeks, no matter how long, the longer the worſe, and there he learns by rote a volume of queſtions and anſwers in print or in manuſcript, carefully compiled for the encouragement of ignorance. The liſt of queſtions at a medical board is as regular as the Rubric; and never did ſlothful prieſt repeat his breviary in an unknown tongue more mechanically or with leſs reverence, than the ordinary candidates for diplomas repeat their unmeaning leſſons.

Such queſtions, my Lord, have no relation to our profeſſion, or almoſt none. Were it upon ſubjects of practical importance relating to the daily

duties of the profeſſion that ſurgeons were examined, their knowledge ſurely ſhould be improved by experience and the continued practice of thoſe duties. But take the ſame men after five years of ſervice, bring them again before a board to be examined, and they will be unable to anſwer one ſingle queſtion. Then it muſt be, that either they have gone backwards in the knowledge of their profeſſion, during that very courſe of experience which is thought to improve knowledge, or it was words—words only, that they recited ſo fluently at their firſt examination, and they have forgotten the words. It is moſt certain, my Lord, that ſlight examinations are but an encouragement to ignorance, while ſevere examinations, like cruel laws, do not deter but rather harden offenders, who rather ſtrive to evade the puniſhment than to live ſo as not to deſerve it.

9th, Examinators are beſides ſeduced into a miſtaken lenity by this circumſtance, that there ſeem to be certain gradations of rank and reſponſibility in the public ſervice, proportioned to certain degrees of proficiency in ſtudy; and a young man after undergoing a very ſlight trial, is declared to be qualified, not as a ſurgeon nor as a mate! but as third or fourth mate of a firſt rate. What is this? a mockery! who ſhall pretend to foretel or limit the degree of danger ariſing from any degree of igno-

rance? Who ſhall prevent the degree of ignorance thus meaſured with critical preciſion, from being fatal to many of thoſe who have the misfortune firſt to fall into the hands of ſuch a perſon? Who ſhall be anſwerable for keeping this fourth mate of a firſt rate in that particular rank which has been aſſigned him? Or who can venture to ſay that this fourth mate will always have other mates above him, or may not in ſome unlucky hour be the only ſurgeon among a thouſand men in the time of battle? Thoſe who thus appoint by examination the fourth mate of a firſt rate, do not declare that he is qualified for being a mate in the navy, they proteſt only that he is not fit to be a firſt, ſecond, or even third mate. Such diſtinctions may indeed appear to convey ſome idea of the perſon being qualified for certain departments; but I fear, that in our profeſſion, where, in certain circumſtances, the ſlighteſt error is fatal, a man who is not, in regard to all the common duties of the profeſſion, fit for every thing! is fit for nothing.

Often have I heard the preſident of a board of examiners addreſs a young man in the following terms: "You ſeem, Sir, to be exceedingly ignorant in many very important matters, but you are young and may improve, we have granted you a diploma with this expectation; and we lay our injunctions upon you to be diligent." Diligent! where? In a

cock-pit? in a camp? in a garriſon? amidſt the ſtorms of the Atlantic Ocean, or under the Torrid Zone, where, to breath and live, is almoſt a labour.

10th, But there are times and ſeaſons when even this form falls almoſt into diſuſe. The country is ſuddenly involved in war. The ſtate having no School of Military Surgery is quite unprovided, and yet ſurgeons of ſome deſcription muſt be procured. Is this a time for examiners to be nice in their ſelection? No, my Lord, it is the occaſion on which uneducated men, or rather uneducated boys, ſwarm up from all parts of the country, and to the diſgrace of humanity and ſcience, aſſume the name and office of ſurgeons. The want of medical aſſiſtance is publicly acknowledged; offers of advanced pay are propoſed in daily advertiſements; the pay is augmented in exact proportion as the uſual inquiſition into the education and talents of candidates is relaxed. What is this but an invitation to the young, the needy, the adventurous! to enter into ſituations for which they are quite unequal? "Why, this is hire, and ſalary, for murder."

Pardon, my Lord, the boldneſs of theſe repreſentations; for if, in what I ſay, there be one word of truth, the ſyſtem is wrong in all its eſſential parts. Neceſſity is the reaſon for men entering into the ſervice; pay, and perquiſites, and penſions, are the motives for continuing in it a few years. Examina-

tion, which ſhould be but a check on education, is regarded as the ſole teſt of merit, and as ſufficient to enforce diligence. A Military School of Surgery has not even been propoſed! but every young man is allowed, after one or two years of deſultory ſtudy, to enter into this department; and theſe very men, when they are to retire to private practice, when they mean to prepare themſelves for becoming ſurgeons of a village! return to ſchool.

You cannot ſuppoſe, my Lord, that this education can be compared with that which might be obtained in a regular inſtitute of Military Surgery; that men neglected in the firſt principles of ſtudy, who return after years of ſervice with this conſciouſneſs preying upon their minds, could ſtand in competition with the regular and approved ſcholars of a National School, who had for years ſtudied a peculiar profeſſion under the care of appointed teachers; who had long looked forward to the public ſervice as their natural and appointed duty; who conſidered Military Surgery, the department in which they were educated, as that in which they were to excel.

Nor has this country the full benefit of the noble opportunities which its peculiar ſituation holds out to medical men. Britain has colonies in all climates; her language and commerce are extended over all quarters of the world; and a nation thus

enterpriſing cannot but be involved in frequent wars. This country, then, which breeds ſailors and ſoldiers inferior to none in ſpirit and diſcipline, ſhould naturally have ſurgeons inferior to none in humanity and ſkill. Their writings ſhould be admired abroad, and the ſchool in which they were educated ſhould be a model for the ſchools of other countries.

But I will no longer ſuppoſe, my Lord, that a meaſure of ſuch uſeful and liberal policy can be long neglected, ſince it would be a benefit to the country, as well as a ſupport to the ſtate. Suppoſe a young man educated in a Military School, impreſſed with a love of his profeſſion, and enabled by a ſound education to profit by experience; ſuppoſe ſuch a man to go out upon foreign ſervice, and to feel actually the influence of various climates and ſeaſons, to remark the cauſes from which troops in certain ſituations ſicken and die, and to be employed in curing the fevers and other rapid and terrible diſeaſes of hot climates, requiring the moſt active and intrepid practice! ſuppoſe him accuſtomed to the innumerable accidents, wounds, fractures, and diſlocations which happen in actual ſervice; ſuppoſe him alſo accuſtomed for years to be at once phyſician, ſurgeon, and apothecary, to a number of men in ſeaſons of infection and danger! would not ſuch a man, my Lord, upon returning to his native place, be reſpected and valued?

being initiated in preliminary ſtudies, and well inſtructed in his profeſſion, he would find buſineſs for every interval from duty; he would improve continually; he would, by his commerce with the world, learn to join the humanity and the manners of a gentleman with the learning of a phyſician. Now, I leave your Lordſhip to judge of the influence it would have on the community, were men thus perfectly educated in their profeſſion to be found in every village; intelligent and ſenſible men, owing their education and their very being to the liberal and dignified policy of Government.

Here, my Lord, I conclude my argument, and proceed to enumerate thoſe propoſitions which I think I have proved; for even in a diſcourſe looſe and deſultory as this is, there muſt be principles. I have proved, that the education of every individual in the ſervice of the ſtate, ſhould be conducted as if he were to arrive at the higheſt rank in his department; that a perfect knowledge in all ordinary duties ſhould be required, even from the loweſt ranks of a profeſſion, where the loſs of life is the conſequence of ignorance; that colleges and univerſities account examination a teſt of diligence, only when the young men have ſtudied ſeveral years under the immediate eye of the profeſſors; that for a department requiring, as this ſurely does, peculiar ſtudies, a particular ſchool ſhould be inſtituted; and, finally, that a regular and careful education, is the only

aſſurance to Government of having in their medical department men learned and zealous in their profeſſion.

Allow me, my Lord, to urge one conſideration more. Government cannot attach men to its ſervice, nor train them to this peculiar profeſſion, by pay only; while, on the other hand, a public education, conducted on a liberal plan, and at the expence of the ſtate (an expence which amounts after all but to a few ſalaries to a few teachers), would be a very high and flattering inducement! To become members of a National School, would be itſelf a privilege! and the chance of riſing, by the force of abilities and genius, to be one of the teachers of the ſchool, would be an object of generous emulation, and a noble reward for a life ſpent in the public ſervice.

Unleſs you can fix the hopes and ambition of a young man on ſome great ſyſtem of life, you never will obtain from him thoſe voluntary and zealous ſervices which no ſenſe of mere duty and ſubordination can produce. IF YOU WOULD ENSURE HIS DILIGENCE, ENDOW HIM WITH KNOWLEDGE.

It is eaſy for any enthuſiaſt to imagine a ſplendid National Inſtitute, when he has but to imagine! but I, my Lord, do not ſo much deſpair of ſeeing a Military School of Surgery erected, as to give way to

imagination: I know my profeſſion too well, I have too ſerious an impreſſion of the importance of a National School, to propoſe any thing which cannot be eaſily accompliſhed: I have alſo, I truſt, more diſcernment and real taſte, than to overload with fantaſtic ornaments of learning and ſpeculative ſcience an important inſtitution, deſigned for teaching young men the ordinary duties of their profeſſion. If it were deſigned to train the pupils of ſuch a ſchool to more elegant or liberal ſtudies, it ſhould be only by the example of their teacher, by his manner of lecturing to them, and by the books put into their hands for their private reading.

I. The Profeſſor of the Military School ſhould teach with perfect care the eſſentials of Anatomy; the great principles of Surgery he ſhould found upon his anatomical lectures and diſſections; and all the great operations, all the accidents which each part of the body is liable to, all kinds of wounds, ſhould be fully explained.

II. Theſe general principles of the ſcience ſhould next be applied to the peculiar duties of the Military Surgeon; the Profeſſor of a Military School muſt teach carefully the peculiar nature of gunſhot wounds.

III. He muſt deliver a ſhort code of Military Medicine explaining the fluxes, fevers, ſpaſms, and infectious diſeaſes, and all the peculiar duties of the camp and hoſpital; and he muſt explain the ſcurvy,

ulcers, infections, and all the diſorders moſt frequent in hoſpitals, in ſhips of war, or in beſieged cities, with detailed hiſtories of the epidemics and plagues which have prevailed during the moſt remarkable ſieges, or which have deſolated countries in a ſtate of war.

IV. He muſt inſtruct his pupils in Medical Geography, in a knowledge of the climates, ſeaſons, coaſts of various countries; the manner of conducting ſoldiers on a foreign expediton, the general care of their health, the choice of encampments, and the forming of hoſpitals on ſhore; how to attend an army in the field, how to convert churches, granaries, public buildings, into occaſional hoſpitals, how to lay the wounded in beſieged towns, how to carry them off the field, or how to convey them along with a retreating army.

V. With theſe, muſt be taught military economics, diet, general medicine, exerciſe, clothing, and all methods of preventing diſeaſe. Without this knowledge, no man is entitled to ſerve: How few are thus taught? How few then are fit for ſervice? How few are there who are not conſcious of thoſe defects in their general education, which no diligence of their own can ever do away?

VI. Every pupil of the School, before he were permitted to leave it, ſhould be made to perform, under the inſpection of the maſter or aſſiſtants of the School, a regular courſe of ſurgical operations upon

one dead body. His companions, attending in their places, benefiting by the leſſons he gets, and operating in their turns.

And in the School there ſhould be models and plans of ſhips, camps, and hoſpitals; wind, ſails, and ventilators; waggons for conveying wounded men; beds, fracture-boxes, operation-tables, medicine-cheſts, and every machine or inſtrument that may be uſeful to the Military Surgeon.

VII. The laſt, and not the leaſt important duty of the teacher, ſhould be to point out for his pupils a future plan of ſtudy, to make for them a ſelection of books; to deliver critical and practical obſervations on thoſe which are to be moſt uſed. The teacher ſhould not only inſtruct his pupils for the preſent, but ſelect objects for their future ſtudy. He ſhould teach them this truth, that he only begins that education which they muſt complete by their own induſtry. He muſt ſhow them how to think for themſelves, and then he may hope to reap in his turn the fruit of their labours, and live to ſee their obſervations and caſes publiſhed under his own care; he might, having himſelf previouſly publiſhed a regular book of anatomy and ſurgery, ſee the maxims of it enforced and illuſtrated by caſes and obſervations of his pupils; and, working along with them, he might thus perpetuate the inſtitution, by publiſhing the WORKS of the MILITARY SCHOOL.

To perform his duties with ſpirit and energy, his place muſt look like what it is; the centre of a great ſchool, ſtanding in an eminent and reſpectable ſtation, whence well inſtructed ſurgeons are continually going out on every line of ſervice, and returning the ineſtimable benefit of a good education, with thoſe contributions of knowledge for which they are well prepared, which they are employed in collecting in various parts of the world, which they ſend willingly to that School with which they are ſtill cloſely allied.

The Profeſſor muſt in all reſpects have the perfect command of his ſchool. He ſhould have a LECTURE-ROOM, capable of being occaſionally enlarged; a DISSECTING-ROOM proportioned to ſo great a purpoſe, wiſely conducted, no doubt, and modeſtly, but under the abſolute protection of the law; a LIBRARY continually increaſing, by certain fees from occaſional pupils; a HOUSE OF ASSISTANTS, like the clerks of a great hoſpital, one keeper of the library, one a diſſector for the claſs, two to inſpect the pupils diſſection, and two ſhould be appointed to write, under the direction of the teacher, his lectures, his ſtudies, the communications from his older pupils, and the extracts from books. The character of ſo rich an education to thoſe young men whom the teacher might prefer to ſuch ſtations, would enſure them all kinds of promotion, and would be ſuch a reward as money could not equal.

But eſpecially, he muſt have always a perfect command of his ſchool! a UNIFORM for thoſe who are of the ſchool, and who are to have the firſt ſeats. His pupils muſt come gratis to his ſchool, and muſt take an oath "to be faithful to their ſtudies; to be ſerviceable to Government in every way; to be diligent in all the occaſional duties committed to their charge; to employ their time in lectures, reading, diſſections, till that period arrive in which they are to be appointed to ſervice." Every one who came rather as a ſtranger to the military ſchool ſhould take his place behind the regular pupils, and pay fees to the inſtitution, for the ſupport of the library, and for defraying the general expence. Thoſe who, having once taken the oath, wiſhed leave the ſervice, ſhould pay up, upon forſaking the ſchool, all their arrears of fees, and put off that uniform which is the badge of their attachment to the ſervice of their country.

Let all that belong to the ſchool have the privilege of attending ſome great hoſpital, or rather give ſome great hoſpital the privilege of having thoſe pupils attend its operations (with a ſmall fee), for ſuch an attendance would almoſt create an hoſpital. Let the library be open daily; let there be fires in all the rooms; let them be made comfortable for ſtudy, and a ſort of home for thoſe attached to the ſchool; let the great volumes of anatomical plates lie always on the tables; let books be if-

ſued in circulation every week; let there be duplicates, according to the judgment of the teacher, of every uſeful book; let there be a reſpectable collection of books on the ſubject of our profeſſion, and a few on hiſtory, politics, and general literature, for the amuſement of leiſure hours, and to give ſome energy to the minds of young men, teaching them to feel their importance in ſociety, and their connexion with Government.

Each regiment, or ſhip of war, when not on ſervice, ſhould ſend one or two of the mates or aſſiſtants to the public ſchool. They ſhould never be allowed to languiſh in a village, or in a harbour, for their time is the property of the State; and that time ſhould be ſacred to ſtudy, which is not employed in actual practice! The ill effects of idleneſs in any way of life, and eſpecially of temporary remiſſions of public, and eſpecially of military duty, are well known.

By the inſtitution of ſuch a ſchool, the whole corps of military ſurgeons, young and old, would be kept continually employed, and always, even in times of peace, ready for ſervice. Thoſe who were about to enter into this way of life, would begin a regular education; and thoſe who are at this moment engaged in ſervice, might, by a perpetual circulation, paſs through this ſchool, have their education renewed, and be aſſimilated

with the whole. The ſchool would be full in times of peace; it would ſend out its ſurgeons with increaſed induſtry and knowledge, when we had declared war. The pupils of this ſchool would be examined by a board of controul, where their teacher ſhould have a ſeat, but no voice; where he could have no other intereſt but that of inſtructing young men, ſo, as to anſwer like maſters in their profeſſion, even before they had begun to practiſe; ſo, as almoſt to annul the formality of examinations, by their ſuperior knowledge.

The maſter of ſuch a ſchool would ſpontaneouſly perform other and higher ſervices; he would have, from his very office, ſuch energy, ſo high a ſenſe of his public duties, ſuch verſatility of talent, that, in all emergencies, he would render important ſervices to the ſtate. He would plan hoſpitals; would go to aſſiſt the ſick and wounded; would help in the detail of new eſtabliſhments. Is it not diſtreſſing, that, when a fleet has ſuffered in ſome ſevere engagement, Government has no general ſurgeon, whoſe advice and ſervices it can command; that the wounded are abandoned to the careleſsneſs of ignorant men, and ſhipwrecked, I may ſay, upon their native ſhores?—Perhaps in certain ſeaſons he might ſail with fleets, or accompany armies, from a deſire of further knowledge; perhaps he would give occaſional lectures at the ſetting out of any

great expedition, going down to meet with the ſurgeons of the fleet, or of the troops, to inquire about all their little wants; to ſee that they were indeed prepared at all points; to converſe with them; to lecture to them.' All theſe occaſional duties he ſhould do without expence to himſelf that he might do them eaſily; and they ſhould be voluntary, that he might perform them with zeal.

My Lord, I know too well that plans of national ſchools have been but the reveries of enthuſiaſtic men; yet ſurely an inſtitution having ſuch objects as theſe, ſo expreſsly limited in its purpoſe, ſo entirely practicable, ſo ſure of attaining its end, ſtands in the firſt rank among plans of national education. This is, to a ſtate, the only ſecurity it ever can have of procuring well inſtructed and diligent men. Were ſuch a ſchool erected, promotion would no longer go by courteſy; examination would ceaſe to be an unmeaning form; examiners, who are now afraid to queſtion thoſe whom they are ſure to find ignorant (and yet dare not reject), would then examine ſeverely, becauſe they would find knowledge to grapple with, and would be able to ſelect well inſtructed ſurgeons.

It is now well known, that there can be no other aſſurance of a man's abilities in his profeſſion

but good education. We aſſure ourſelves of a man's knowledge rather by his education, than by queſtions which are ſo often conned for the occaſion, and repeated coldly, without intereſt, without underſtanding. No univerſity truſts to this ſlippery teſt, but requires, even for ordinary ſtudies, a peculiar and regular education continued for years. In this ſenſe, a Military School ſhould be a regular College; it ſhould be erected in the centre of other ſchools; the pupils ſhould have the choice of other teachers, and inducements to various and liberal ſtudies. But, they ſhould be early attached, and with ſenſible and ſober views, to that ſervice which now they fall into by chance and misfortune. They ſhould be early trained to thoſe parts of knowledge which now they learn from books, too late in their courſe of ſervice to be of much uſe. They ſhould be well read in thoſe authors who now fall into their hands by a ſort of accident. While they had their choice of other ſtudies, they ſhould feel themſelves peculiarly reſponſible for their perfect acquaintance with all the leſſons of the *Military School.* They ſhould have, in ſhort, every inducement to ſerve, but ſhould feel no bondage in ſerving. They ſhould be attached to the School only by the uſefulneſs of their ſtudies, but they ſhould be allowed to leave it with no other forfeiture than that of loſing their place and precedence.

For the ſtudies of ſuch a ſchool, genius is not ſo highly neceſſary; diligence alone is required; in medicine, and in ſurgery, above all, enterpriſe is dangerous, and experiment almoſt guilty! while that good ſenſe which is ſo univerſally diffuſed, that plain knowledge which is ſo eaſily acquired, that moderation which induſtry, and the knowledge of plain and ſimple matters always begets, are ſufficient for the ordinary occaſions of life, and more to be prized, in my eſtimation, than the moſt ſplendid talents. How often is genius wild, ungovernable, dangerous? How much, on the other hand, do we value the marks of induſtry, humanity, and modeſt knowledge! ſure tokens of a uſeful man? And ſuch, I am perſuaded, would be the character of every pupil bred in the Military School.

In that ſchool even the manners would be peculiar. It would be attended by young people who had begun to know care and misfortune; who had loſt the petulance of boys, and aſſumed the ſerious and ſenſible deportment of men; the importance of their occupations would repreſs that ſpirit of diſputation, that paſſion for politics, falſe philoſophy, irreligion, and atheiſm! the open licentious and proud profeſſion of which, as meritorious and liberal doctrines, are but too much obſervable in ſchools of medicine. A ſchool of young men beginning to ſtudy for the medical ſervice, mixed with others who had return-

ed from abroad, would compoſe, under ſenſible teachers, a reſpectable and improving ſociety; where the older pupils, renewing their ſtudies, their diſſections and readings in the library of the ſchool, would ſhow the younger members an example of diligence; while their employment of correcting their journals of diſeaſes, compoſed while they were abroad, and reading their caſes and obſervations in evening ſocieties of the pupils, would raiſe the ſpirit of improvement, and the love of the ſervice to enthuſiaſm.

A bill of incorporation, my Lord, is freely granted to the moſt inſignificant ſociety of individuals wiſhing to hold common property, or to the loweſt mechanics deſirous of monopolizing their own trade. Give then to the ſurgeons of the army and navy a Corporation and a School, and they will not I am confident be inſenſible of the return it is proper for them to make, nor of the ſtation and reſpectability which it becomes them to ſupport. "He that delicately bringeth up his ſervant from a child, ſhall have him become his ſon at length."

I have ventured, my Lord, to expreſs, yet I hope without preſumption or rudeneſs, a firm opinion of the dignity of the profeſſion in which it is my lot to be engaged; while that department of it which is connected with Government, far from being ſuperior, or producing men conſpicuous for talents

and virtue, has no public character, and is by no means ſupported in that ſtate which the honour of the profeſſion, and the cauſe of humanity require. The ſervice is filled up with men too young, too imperfectly educated to ſupport their profeſſion; and when at laſt even the young and inexperienced are no longer attracted by the moſt liberal offers of Government; when not only talents and abilities, but men of any deſcription, are wanting; when mere mechanical hands cannot be procured! I perceive the abſolute neceſſity of ſome permanent inſtitution to ſupport this department of the ſervice.

Our profeſſion have been charged with diſſaffection. No, my Lord; but among many ignorant there are ſome learned. There are men in the medical departments of the army and navy, and, I truſt, not a few, who have had a perfect education; who are capable of feeling for the honour of their profeſſion, and of ſupporting it; capable of eſtabliſhing, even by their own unaſſiſted endeavours, that National School which the ſtate of ſcience and the welfare of the community, and even the intereſt of the loweſt of their own order, require. Can ſuch men go out upon dangerous ſervice without feeling themſelves ill ſupported in their duties? Can they obey the deſpotic orders of men ignorant of every thing like ſcience without feeling themſelves degraded? Have they a directory of men

of talents and learning to appeal to in all their difficulties? men capable of conducting the intereſt of the medical department? I believe they have not; and thence it is that many are diſſatisfied, none diſaffected!—without allowing this fair diſtinction, my Lord, with how ill a grace ſhould this appeal come before your Lordſhip?

It is rarely by his knowledge in ſcience that any man attains the command of this department; it is by gradation, and by patronage, that he is raiſed to it, after having ſpent much of his life in the drudgeries of practice; and behold, when he ſhould give his whole mind and ſoul to the conducting of a great department, he is too much wedded to the pride and pomp of the great world to waſte one thought on his duties, unleſs it be to contrive how he may beſt ſatisfy or ſhun thoſe ſolicitations with which he is beſieged. And this courtly duty, my Lord, even a phyſician and a courtier is ill able to fulfil; for when he has arrived at this high ſtation, the active ſeaſon of life is paſt, he is familiar with the great, a few hours only in the day are devoted to his bureau; and that vigour of mind is waſted in the toils of daily practice, which ſhould enable him to enter with zeal into the details of ſervice, or to take a broad commanding view of the whole province which is committed to his care.—Thus, my Lord, it happens, that hands wanting natural ſtrength are encum-

bered with power, and the petty concerns of an individual, his daily buſineſs and little gains, are confounded with the moſt important intereſts of the ſtate.

How much the inſtitution of a National School would reform thoſe abuſes, time may prove; but we have only to look abroad to other countries to be convinced how much the want of ſuch a ſchool is a diſgrace to our own. The Academy of Surgery in France was erected after the ambitious wars of Lewis XIV. had taught his ſucceſſor how much the country had ſuffered. The Surgical School of Pruſſia was erected almoſt as ſoon as Pruſſia became a kingdom, and is celebrated for its models of anatomy and of diſeaſed parts. The inſtitution of a School of Surgery in Ruſſia was one of the chief objects of Peter I. the father of his country; his attachment to this ſcience, the liberal terms on which he purchaſed the muſeums of Ruiſch and other anatomiſts, the rewards and dignities he conferred on thoſe ſurgeons who ſettled in Ruſſia, his regular attendance at the hoſpitals, and his aſſiſting frequently at ſurgical operations, are well known. The great Military College of Surgery in Germany, erected under the ſuperintendence of Brambilla, is the moſt ſplendidly endowed in buildings, inſtruments, books and teachers, of any in Europe; and within a few years has, by the excellency of its teachers and pupils, become famous all over the world. The Mi-

litary School of Surgery in Holland was ſuch as every maritime kingdom ſhould have; its teachers careful, its ſtudents unremittingly diligent, its examinations ſevere, its ſubſerviency to the ſtate of great importance. Be aſſured, my Lord, that in this reſpect our own country, in which your Lordſhip holds ſo high a rank, in whoſe government you hold ſo diſtinguiſhed a ſhare; this country of England, ſo renowned for humanity and courage, is below all the other nations of Europe.

My Lord, if I have a fear for the ſucceſs of the plan which I have propoſed, it is, that it will be too uſeful, too commanding to be ſuffered. Even here there is danger in greatneſs! On the firſt view of a plan in which other inſtitutions will be abſorbed, leſſer offices annihilated, and great appointments comprehended with its ſweeping circumference, what will not little men ſay? But, my Lord, I am no politician, either by breeding or by nature. I would not work upwards through intereſt, cabal and petty ſolicitation, to your Lordſhip's favour; I claim your protection for a ſcheme which embraces a great public good. I would have it operate with that independent influence which becomes a great inſtitution, downwards from the higher powers, having by its conſtitution the means of arrangement, economy and energy within itſelf.

Once more, allow me to expreſs a wiſh to know

" How this may be approved of by thoſe who are uſed to judge of matters connected with the ſtate ?" But let this propoſal ſtand or fall by its own merits, unconnected with me or my little purpoſes, for ſuch will be ſuppoſed. The execution of ſuch a plan requires uncommon talents ; " Let it be given to the wiſeſt." Whoever may be appointed to fulfil it ſhall want no help that I can give ; I will aſſiſt him with books, manuſcripts, plans or drawings, heartily and honeſtly, without irritation, envy, or reſerve ; of which promiſe let this be my ſolemn and public pledge.

It is the fate of thoſe who attach themſelves to ſcience to ſtruggle with continual difficulties ; but ſuch honourable difficulties I would not decline. Indeed, my Lord, I am not building a ladder for myſelf to climb to ſome ambitious height ; I am thinking more of others than of myſelf ; I am not fit nor willing to be removed from " that ſoil where chance has rooted me."—Every thing, then, reſts with your Lordſhip. This plan is encumbered with no little deſigns on my part ; it is ſubmitted to your Lordſhip, becauſe, in ſo reſponſible and ſo high a ſtation, you are, as an organ of the public mind, to judge betwixt that public and the individual who preſumes to obtrude his advice in matters of general concern. No great man has been ſolicited to preſent this Memorial, no private friend has

reviſed it; it comes before your Lordſhip without ſupport, with many faults, but with ſome apologies alſo; it is in every ſenſe a private communication; it is printed, my Lord, merely in token of reſpect.

Senſible, that if there be propriety and good ſenſe in what I have ſuggeſted, it will ſink into your Lordſhip's mind, I leave the reſt to your deliberate goodneſs. For this plan I feel no other predilection than I ſhould have felt and expreſſed had it been propoſed by my foreſt enemy; and I profeſs to have no partial intereſt in its ſucceſs, both becauſe I am far from thoſe ſcenes of clamour for promotion where I might benefit by your patronage, and becauſe it is the peculiar privilege of our profeſſion to have higher and more honourable rewards than any Government can beſtow.

With all poſſible duty and reſpect,

I remain,

My Lord,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

JOHN BELL.

Edinburgh, 1800.

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